

THE
NEW WEST.

ITS OUTLETS TO THE OCEAN.

MEMORIAL
OF THE
KANSAS CITY BOARD OF TRADE,

SUBMITTED TO THE

Transportation Committee of the Senate of the United States,
During its Sitting at St. Louis.

THE RESOURCES, AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS, COMMERCE
AND TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF WESTERN
MISSOURI, IOWA, KANSAS, NEBRAS-
KA AND COLORADO.

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BOARD OF TRADE ROOMS,
KANSAS CITY, Oct. 25, 1873.

*To Hon. WILLIAM WINDOM, and Members of the Committee
of the Senate of the United States:*

GENTLEMEN: The Board of Trade of Kansas City desire to represent to your committee the needs of the country comprehended by its commerce in marketing the products of its soil and receiving the merchandise consumed by it in exchange.

The country in question is new to the commerce of the Union—its importance dating from the close of the late civil war—its population in that time having increased at a moderate estimate one million in number.

It embraces Western Missouri, Western Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, the Indian Territory, Northwestern Texas and New Mexico—covering twelve degrees of latitude, sixteen degrees of longitude, and comprises an area of more than 600,000 square miles.

This vast district of country has but one navigable river—the Missouri—and its lines of commerce are thus exclusively by railway, except the limited margin on either side of that river.

The system of railway construction for this interior region—the geographical centre of the United States and of the continent—is, so far as the great trunk lines are involved, very far advanced, and are concentrated at the mouth of the Kansas river, the nearest and most available point for all the country to the navigable waters of the Missouri river—as you will see by the map.

The agricultural portion of this part of the Union embraces the portions of Missouri and Iowa referred to, the States of Nebraska and Kansas, and the Indian Territory, and is of a more uniform character in quality and production than any equal area on the globe. The soil is of exceptional fertility, and the official report by the census of 1870 shows it to

embrace the largest and most productive corn and winter wheat area in the world.

It also embraces the only natural pastoral region in North America, where, from time beyond the knowledge of this continent, have been subsisted the countless herds of aboriginal cattle, exceeding in number the domestic herds of the globe. These are now being supplanted by the cattle of civilization. The present season has brought together for market, at the several points in Kansas, on the feeding grounds of the Kansas City stock market, over \$7,000,000 worth of grass-fed cattle alone.

In addition to this, a careful computation from the crop statistics of the census of 1870 shows that for the year ending June of that year there was produced in this region 26,452,116 bushels of wheat; 631,353 bushels of rye; 89,236,854 bushels of corn; 24,367,214 bushels of oats; 1,429,946 bushels of barley; 1,856,-138 tons of hay; 6,235,366 pounds of tobacco.

In live stock it produced: Of hogs, 2,596,185; cattle, other than exclusively grass-fed, 533,833; of grass-fed, 2,061,343, exclusive of the Indian Territory where there are large herds but from which there are no returns; of mules, 116,585; of sheep, 2,233,326; of horses, 835,833.

The value in soil products of the amount produced by these figures, at the current market rates paid at Kansas City this season, would amount to \$85,228,837. And the live stock, at a low average per head, are in value \$26,557,630.

Or, in the aggregate, this portion of the Union produced in 1870, from its soil alone, a wealth of more than one hundred and twenty-eight millions of dollars.

A country thus productive, and which has become so practically within seven years, and which has seen its three most productive years since the census figures were obtained, is, we most respectfully submit, entitled to be heard on a question so vital as that for which your committee was raised to inquire into and report upon—transportation.

And we approach this part of our subject with the statement—that, as compared with other portions of the Union affected by both the foreign and domestic market, it is practically cut off from both, and in times of abundant crops its products do not admit of shipment with profit to the producer—only when prices are high, induced by failure of crops east of the Mississippi or in Europe, or both, can its grain be profitably transported to the Atlantic seaboard by present facilities.

From Kansas City, the converging point of the principal great trunk lines, to New York is by rail fourteen hundred miles, being nearer to that city than from any point on the Missouri river above the mouth of the Kansas, and for this reason taken as the standard of computation.

Taking the rate of transportation by rail, as we find it in the documents printed by Congress, to be $12\frac{1}{2}$ mills per ton per mile, we find that the cost of a bushel of wheat of 60 pounds,

from Kansas City to New York, would be $52\frac{1}{2}$ cents—or $87\frac{1}{2}$ cents per 100 pounds for all products.

This we may assume to be the rate by all rail, and for our corn and pork, which come into market after the close of navigation, rail transportation is our only dependence. As to corn, it is quoted the day on which this is written in New York at $58\frac{1}{2}$ to 60 cents per bushel—leaving to the farmer, the shipper and for all expenses getting it in the car at Kansas City, a margin of six to eight cents. Is it strange that it is burned for fuel to save the destruction of timber? and cheaper than coal at cost of mining and delivery?

It is unnecessary to lengthen the argument by parallel illustrations as to other products, as this one affecting our great staple is sufficient—everything being governed by it.

NATURAL OUTLETS.

But these disabilities can be remedied. They are artificial, and result from causes which are susceptible of remedy—and which have been in great part removed by private and corporate enterprise.

And we are before your committee to-day because it is proposed to devise a general system of relief for the whole country, by opening up cheaper channels of transportation by the common fund of the nation. And because what is needed in this respect by us can only be done under national authority.

There are two outlets for the products we have referred to:

One by way of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

One by the harbor at Galveston, Texas.

BY GALVESTON HARBOR.

We shall consider them in the reverse order in which they are mentioned.

From Kansas City to Galveston it is now 800 miles as the railroads are constructed, but which can be reduced within 700 miles—or just half the distance to New York. It is as to cost of transportation, as if Kansas City was removed East to Columbus, Ohio. The question as it addresses itself to us is:

“Why should Kansas City, and the country surrounding it, with its one hundred millions of annual production be compelled to seek the market through Columbus, Ohio, any more than that Columbus should be compelled to seek her market by way of Kansas City?”

If the port of Galveston was made accessible for ocean going vessels, the wheat and corn of the Missouri Valley could seek the ocean at $26\frac{1}{4}$ cents per bushel, and pay the same rate it does to-day to New York at $52\frac{1}{2}$ cents—adding a quarter of a dollar to the price of the 115,000,000 of bushels of these crops, produced in 1870—or more than \$28,000,000 to the farmers of this New West every year.

Then the country embraced in this central portion of the nation would be, as to foreign markets, as favorably situated

as the States of Indiana and Ohio, and our rich lands increased in corresponding value.

And why the national treasury should not improve this harbor equally with those of the lakes and Atlantic seaboard is, we submit, not a question for discussion. Its need is all that requires to be established. And this we feel our illustration and the facts recited most conclusively establishes.

BY THE MISSISSIPPI.

The other outlet for the Upper Missouri to the markets of the world is by the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

There are two questions to be considered in connection with this route.

The navigation of the Missouri river by barges, its seasons of low water and ice—and the low water and ice of the Mississippi river above the mouth of the Ohio:

And a connection by railway with the Mississippi at a point below ice, and at permanently deep water.

The cost of shipping grain, per bushel, from St. Louis to New Orleans may be fixed by present facilities, at a high stage of water, at eight to ten cents. It may be brought to a lower minimum, but we prefer to be within actual figures, as demonstrated in practical transportation.

At present, as the channel is in the Missouri, it would require lighter tonnage in vessels, and thus the cost be somewhat enhanced over the same distances in the Mississippi. We depend entirely upon conjecture when we put the cost from Kansas City to St. Louis, by barges, at about the same figures—or in all about 16 to 20 cents per bushel from Kansas City to New Orleans.

This would be a saving to ocean ports, over the present rates to New York, of $32\frac{1}{2}$ cents for all grain for European demand, and of $22\frac{1}{2}$ cents to New York itself, counting ten cents from New Orleans to New York.

We know, it is claimed, and we believe within the limits of practical demonstration, that these figures can be materially reduced, but we prefer to take what has been done, as it is ample to command consideration—leaving to the future and mutual enterprise to reduce the cost by both routes. The point we desire to enforce being the relative cost between the two—both being susceptible of farther cheapening.

The Missouri river has not been tested by being navigated by grain barges in tow of steamers, as has the Mississippi between St. Louis and New Orleans. It is believed by practical men that it can be so used successfully, and we have so considered it in estimating the cost of transportation. But frankness requires us to say that it has yet to be demonstrated.

But conceding that it is so, it is insufficient as an outlet for the products of the vast area of country dependent upon it. And for these reasons:

From August until the close of November is the low water

season, when the channel contains but from three and a half to five feet of water.

From the last week in November to the middle of March, navigation is suspended by ice. True, in some seasons the interruption from this cause is more brief, but there is no safety within that period, and even by steamboats, is seldom attempted, until the freezing season has entirely passed. And above the mouth of the Kansas river, the obstructions from ice is often some weeks later.

Thus the season of good navigation in the Missouri may be included from April to August—at its best after the annual rise in June.

Our corn crop is never ready for shipment until after ice has closed the river, and our pork crop, made from it, necessarily so, as well as most of the beef—although a portion of this can go forward before ice is formed. The wheat, in part, may go before the close of navigation, but so far as the Missouri can be availed of, most of our products must lie in store until the opening of navigation in the spring.

The same obstacles await us between St. Louis and Cairo—both from low water in the autumn months and ice and low water during those of the winter.

The general result arrived at by these facts and figures is, that this central area of the country has a common interest with the whole Mississippi Valley in the removal of obstructions to navigation in the channels of that river and its tributaries, and the removal of the barrier at its mouth, as the cheapest and most available outlet to the markets of the world.

But confined as we are to the one river, the main dependence for gathering the crops and concentrating the products of the agricultural lands for transport is, and for all time must be, upon the railway. And for fully one half the year we must use the railroad to reach the Mississippi. And to fully utilize that river it must be reached by rail below the mouth of the Ohio, where an open channel and deep water can be found throughout the year.

THE MISSISSIPPI AT MEMPHIS.

Private enterprise has already fixed upon the point for this connection at Memphis, and the work of constructing a railroad from Kansas City to that city begun—the first hundred miles being well advanced and work going forward at this time. The importance of this connection, and the aid of your committee and through you of Congress, will be seen from the considerations we present.

From the mouth of the Kansas river to St. Louis by the Missouri is 400 miles.

From St. Louis to Memphis 450 miles.

From Memphis to New Orleans 750 miles—or 1,600 miles in all—from Kansas City to New Orleans.

In the season when the Missouri is closed it is by rail to St. Louis 283 miles; and from St. Louis to Memphis 319 miles—

602 miles by rail from the mouth of the Kansas to Memphis—where the permanently open river and deep water is reached.

By air line from Kansas City to Memphis it is 365 miles, and can be traversed by rail within 390 miles—in round numbers 400 miles.

The Upper Missouri Valley can thus reach the Mississippi river below ice and at permanently deep water by 200 miles less rail transportation than as now employed by way of St. Louis.

By employing 107 miles longer rail transit than at present, 450 miles of river are saved, as against the route by St. Louis; and by employing 212 less miles of railway, the same point is reached by all rail, as now. And in both cases the only obstacles now existing are completely and entirely overcome.

This obtained, and uniform freights throughout the year are secured, or, if there is any difference, the winter freights will be lower than the summer, from the fact, that the boats that are driven from the upper rivers by ice will seek the Lower Mississippi for winter employment, making tonnage more abundant than in the summer.

Then with the obstructions at the mouth of the Mississippi removed, or avoided, ocean steamers could land at Memphis just as freely as at New Orleans, and grain be loaded direct from the elevators and shipped to either New York, Philadelphia, Boston, or to Europe. And the flour made from our winter wheat, equal to any in the Union, be shipped by the shortest route to the West India and South American markets.

It would practically place our grain port within four hundred miles of the mouth of the Kansas and give us both for export and import the lowest rates, and uniform at all seasons.

Taking the same rates of charges on freight by river and rail, as we have used above, we could by this proposed route place grain in Memphis at 15 cents, in New Orleans at 20 cents, New York at 30 cents, and Liverpool at 35 cents per bushel—or even by rehandling at New Orleans in addition to Memphis, it would only make the cost of our grain at New York and Liverpool 35 and 40 respectively—or a saving over present rates to Europe of $36\frac{1}{2}$ cents for every bushel of the grain of Western Iowa, Western Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska.

At this writing grain from St. Louis to Memphis costs $22\frac{1}{2}$ cents per 100 lbs., or about 14 cents per bushel. To New Orleans by barge 30 cents per 100 lbs., or 18 cents per bushel. By barge from Kansas City at corresponding rates to those now paid, grain at Memphis would cost 20 to 22 cents, and at New Orleans 24 to 26 cents per bushel.

But with railroad to Memphis to-day, we could save 5 to 7 cents at the rates now charged on the Mississippi river. And this saving would hold good pro rata on any reduction which improved facilities in transportation might give in the future.

It is thus demonstrated, not by presumptive figures and contingencies in the future, but upon actual prices, as paid to-day, that with railway connection between the Missouri river and the Mississippi—at the mouth of the Kansas and at Mem-

phis—the surplus of our annual product of 146,000,000 bushels of grain can find its cheapest and most available outlet to market.

There is another element in this proposed route to which we have not alluded—that of time.

The Missouri river, down stream, is not safe for navigation by night, and has never been used by steamers descending the river—the practice always, and made imperative by the rules of the underwriters, being to land and remain at moorings during the darkness. It would require from three to four days for a fleet of barges from Kansas City to reach St. Louis, and longer in proportion to distance from all points above; while changing cargo at St. Louis and thence to Memphis, would require eight to ten days' time for our grain to reach that point.

Cars could be loaded at any point on the railroads of the Upper Missouri, or from the elevators at Kansas City and unloaded into vessels or elevators at Memphis in from 36 to 40 hours, thus adding largely to the profit of shipment—saving a week in time and the high rates of insurance above the mouth of the Ohio and in the Missouri river.

There is but one more proposition in this connection to discuss, and that is the point on the Missouri river at which the railroad connecting with the Mississippi should commence. We have assumed it to be at the mouth of the Kansas river—and for the reasons :

That is the nearest and most available point for the country in question to reach navigation, as an examination of the map demonstrates :

It has been so recognized by becoming the converging point for the great trunk lines of railway already built and in operation—being to-day the commercial centre of all the country embraced in this memorial :

The Missouri river, below the Kansas, is open for navigation later in the autumn and earlier in the spring, making a month's difference in navigation in some seasons, over points above, and having a larger volume of water, is safer for river craft and heavier tonnage than above the mouth of the Kansas :

And it is the nearest point at which the Missouri river can be reached for all the country west and north—the distance being increased from either above or below, as the map will demonstrate :

And because the construction of this important work has already been commenced, and over one million of dollars expended upon it.

We have thus briefly laid before you the leading facts in regard to the important portion of the common territory of the Union, with which we are bound up in common interests and in common destiny.

We have shown that it produces nearly one hundred and fifty millions of bushels of grain annually.

We have demonstrated that as a meat and wool producing

region it surpasses any other portions of the United States—and that as yet it is in the infancy of its development in this respect.

We have not adverted to its wealth in iron, coal and lead—for the disabilities under which its agriculture labors are immediate and pressing—but in all these mineral resources it is equal to any portion of the Union.

We have shown that by distance and other obstacles it is practically cut off from the markets of our own nation and the world.

We have shown how by two natural and near outlets it can be placed, as to markets, on a footing with the most favored interior districts of the Union.

And we claim that if so favored, and its products allowed to reach a market, that the effect will be not only beneficial to its own people, but will open up to the industrial masses of other portions an abundant and cheap supply of all the staple elements of food, both now and in increasing volume for all time to come.

The relief then asked by this portion of the people of the United States may be briefly stated :

1. The improvement of the harbor at Galveston, so as to allow of ocean going vessels to land at the wharves of that city.
2. The removal or avoidance of the obstruction at the mouths of the Mississippi.
3. To aid in securing a connection with permanent deep water and permanent freedom from ice with the Mississippi, as indicated, by railway from the mouth of the Kansas river to Memphis.

The two first come under the general power of Congress, touching river and harbor improvement.

As to the latter, we can see no difference between connecting commercial points by rail and by canal. And we are thoroughly convinced that in all the projects submitted to you for the better accommodation of the different portions of the Union, there has been no one proposed conferring so large benefit upon such important interests and so large an area of country, that can be afforded at so small a cost to the National Treasury as this.

Were it within the scope of this memorial, or within the purposes for which your committee has been raised, we could demonstrate that what we ask, to thus connect us with the Mississippi, can be fully accomplished, and that speedily, without the expenditure of a dollar in money by the General Government.

And upon a favorable consideration of the matters herein presented, and its recognition by your committee as deserving the attention and consideration of Congress, the method by which it can be thus accomplished will be laid before that body through your committee.

R. T. VAN HORN,
W. H. POWELL,
On behalf of the Board of Trade.

